

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 1 August 2023

PRESENT: Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and
Councillors: A. Best, J. Davies, L. Davies, K. Dawson, T. Kelt, B. Kenney,
P. Leason, J. Metters, J. Powell, N. Powell and C. Thornicroft

Officers: L. Trigg and T. Williams

ABSENT: Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Burgess, I. Fordham, J. Hood, A. Mottershead and
R. Townsend

GP24/057 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: J. Battrick, I. Fordham, J. Hood,
A. Mottershead and R. Townsend

Where a reason for absence is given, this reason was approved for the purposes of
Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

GP24/058 **Declarations of Interests**

None

GP24/059 **Requests for Dispensations**

None

GP24/060 **To receive the report of the County Councillors**

County Councillor Jill Hood

Councillor Hood was not available on this occasion to give her report.

County Councillor I. Parry

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

GP24/061 **To receive the report of Borough Councillors**

Borough Councillors had no report on this occasion.

GP24/062 **Representations from Members of the Public**

None

GP24/063 **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 4 July 2023 (Minute Numbers GP24/034 – GP24/056) be approved as a correct record.

GP24/064 **Minutes of Sub-Committees**

There were no sub-committee minutes for consideration.

GP24/065 **Grants to Local Organisations**

The Committee considered the following request for a grant:

- a. **Organisation: Futures2gether**
 Amount Requested: £470
 Reason: To support the costs of offering clients the opportunity to take part in multi sports sessions provided by Coaches from Stoke City Football Club.

The Committee had deferred consideration of the grant application at the last meeting pending further information on whether the project would be able to go ahead if the Town Council's support was not forthcoming (Minute reference GP24/042, 4 July 2023).

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that Futures2gether had advised him that if the Town Council did not offer its support to the project the organisation would look elsewhere for potential grants or supporting opportunities. If unable to find any that were suitable, they would not be able to access the sports sessions proposed in the application.

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £470 to Futures2gether.

GP24/066 **Rural England Prosperity Fund Grant**

The Committee considered a request from the Town Clerk who was seeking approval in consultation with the Committee Chairman, to submit a bid to the Rural England Prosperity Fund to support work at the Heritage Centre.

Stafford Borough Council's Rural England Prosperity Fund Policy and the Expression of Interest Application form had been attached to the agenda for the meeting. A link to further information about the application process had also been enclosed.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that this was an opportunity to bring some money in to the Heritage Centre and to improve on the Town Council's original proposal and offer. This could include interactive and IT equipment and items for display, for which there was currently no budget. He said the Town Council met the eligibility criteria.

RESOLVED: To give authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee, to make an application to the Rural England Prosperity Fund for a grant of £40,000 to support the work of the Heritage Centre.

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GP24/067 Public Spaces Protection Order Consultation

The Committee considered a Stafford Borough Council Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) Consultation.

An email from the Borough Council had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting along with a copy of the current Public Spaces Protection Order and Consultation form detailing several specific questions. A link to additional information had also been enclosed.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the consultation could also be completed by individuals wishing to express their personal views and was not exclusive to the Town Council.

RESOLVED: That the following responses are given to Stafford Borough Council in response to the Public Spaces Protection Order Consultation:

Do you think the restrictions in the current PSPO need to be renewed and be included in the new order?

Yes, the restrictions in the current PSPO should be renewed and additionally include Adies Alley and the area around Workhouse Bridge, Stone.

Do you think the following additional restrictions should be included in the new Order?

Busking in Stafford and Stone Town Centre

No, busking in Stafford and Stone town centres should not be included in the new Order.

Busking with amplifiers in Stafford and Stone Town centre

No, busking with the use of amplifiers should not be restricted in the new Order, up to the point when they become a public nuisance.

Feeding birds in public open spaces

Yes, the feeding of birds in public open spaces should be added as an additional restriction to the PSPO.

Using BBQs or equivalents on Public Open Spaces

Yes, the use of BBQs or equivalents should be restricted and be permitted in specific designated public areas only.

Clarification should be given to the definition of 'public area' so as not to exclude organised uses such as activities arranged by the Scouting and Guiding movement where the lighting of firepits within the vicinity of the scout or guide hut is part of their recreational program.

Do you think the restrictions relating to dogs should be extended to cover all parks in Stafford Borough?

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No, restrictions relating to dogs do not need to be extended to cover all parks in Stafford Borough.

Do you think we should continue to exclude dogs from children’s play areas in Stafford Borough?

Yes, dogs should continue to be excluded from Children’s play areas in Stafford Borough.

GP24/068 Budget Monitoring Report – June 2023

The report* of the Town Clerk was noted.

GP24/069 Heritage Centre

The Committee considered an update on the Heritage Centre.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that he was awaiting confirmation that the building work was complete. The contract appeared to be on schedule and the work done to a high standard.

He said he had advertised the new Heritage Centre Manager post and was hoping for a good response from job applicants.

The Chairman advised the Committee that there were two parts to the Heritage Centre Working group, the build side (involving conversion of the fabric of the old fire station building) and the artifacts (internal fittings and the displays).

The Chairman invited Councillor Leason to give an update on the work of the ‘artifacts’ sub-group and he advised the Committee that the proposal was to open the Heritage Centre with the small room to begin with (hopefully later this year) which will concentrate on the story of Stone. The larger room will open around springtime in 2024 when the collection of artifacts will be ready for display. All information was subject to a report by the Working Group to this Committee.

GP24/070 Frank Jordan Centre

The Committee considered an update on the Frank Jordan Centre.

The Town Clerk confirmed that Stone Community Hub had now moved from the Walton Suite to the Christchurch Suite, which had proven suitable for their needs.

The Town Council was in the process of returning back into use the Walton Suite and what was the food bank store. The Walton Suite should be ready for hire in September after redecoration, with the storeroom to follow afterwards.

The Town Clerk suggested the food bank store (which will become a meeting room available for hire), be renamed the Stonefield Room, maintaining the theme of Town Council wards.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the fees and charge needed to be set for use of the rooms and suggested that the Walton Suite be priced at around two thirds of the cost of the St Michael’s Suite and the Stonefield Room at around 50%

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of the cost of the St Michael's Suite. This ratio should be maintained going forward.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that between the St Michael's Suite and the Walton Suite it was likely that all previous hirers of the Christchurch Suite could be accommodated. He said the people transferring to the St Michael's Suite will continue paying Christchurch Suite rates as it was the Town Council that had instigated the change.

GP24/071 50th Anniversary of Stone Town Council

The Committee considered membership of the 50th Anniversary of Stone Town Council Working Group following its set up at the last meeting of the Committee (Minute Number GP23/052).

RESOLVED: That membership of the 50th Anniversary of Stone Town Council Working Group consist of:

Councillors: J. Davies L. Davies, K. Dawson, R. Kenney and P. Leason

GP24/072 Town Council Payments

RESOLVED: To note the list* of Town Council payments made during the period 1 to 30 June 2023.

GP24/073 Update from Working Groups:

Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group

The Chairman advised the Committee that a report had already been given earlier in the meeting (Minute Number GP24/069).

Engagement with Young People

Councillor Dawson advised the Committee that the Working Group had not met but she was in the process of communicating with the Town Clerk on her report.

GP24/074 To receive reports from Town Councillors on attendance at meetings of local organisations and outside bodies as a representative of the Town Council

Stone Area Parish Liaison Group

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that the first Liaison Group meeting since the parish elections had taken place on 26 July 2023 where he had been elected Chairman for the upcoming year and Councillor Peter Jones of Eccleshall Parish Council had been elected Vice Chairman.

The meeting had been useful in sharing information and common concerns with highways being one of the topics discussed. The next meeting of the Liaison Group on 1 November 2023 will take place face to face (not virtually on Zoom) and a Staffordshire County Council highways representative will be invited to present to the Group.

Stone ATC

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that a meeting of Stone ATC had taken place on 11 June 2023 and the Squadron was in very good health with the maximum number of cadets signed up. He said they had stopped trying to

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fundraise for a minibus in favour of a flight simulator which was a more achievable project. They were currently looking for a replacement Chaplain and have a person with the necessary credentials in mind.

Age Concern Stone & District

Councillor Thornicroft confirmed that no meeting had taken place.

Stafford & Stone Access Group

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that no meeting of the Access Group had taken place.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

Councillor Thornicroft advised the Committee that although no meeting had taken place, he had attended a Plot Walk on Sunday 2 July 2023.

Prior to the walk there was a meeting in the barn where the main item of discussion was the travellers that had occupied the play plot opposite Christchurch School.

The Borough Council rent the play plot from the trustees and there was some discussion as to how access could be prevented in the future.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

Councillor Powell advised the Committee that no meeting had taken place.

SPCA Executive Committee

Mr M. Green was not available to give a report.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that this was a personal appointment and there would be the opportunity to nominate a new representative towards the end of the year.

Stone Traders Group Directors' Meeting

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that no meeting had taken place.

CHAIRMAN